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Mrs. Downey To Visit Son in Red China

NEW YORK, Aug. 3 (AP). — Mrs. Downey, a school-teacher from New Britain, Conn., boarded a jet plane at Bradley Airport today for San Francisco en route to visit her son, John Downey, 30, a life prisoner in communist China.

"I am extremely optimistic that he will some day be released," Mrs. Downey said. "I don't know why I feel that way. Perhaps it's just intuition."

Her son, a civilian employee of the United States Army, had been sentenced to life imprisonment for espionage. He was imprisoned in 1952. She last visited him in January, 1958.

Mrs. Downey said she received a letter from him last week.

"He never complains, and is always cheerful," she said. "It is amazing how much he knows about things going on in the world."

Mrs. Downey said, "I will talk to him about the elections, the family home town developments and sports, particularly baseball."

She was seen off by another son, William, 27, a bank employee in New York. She said she expected to be crossing into Red China on August 11 and that she had a two-week visa from the Peiping government.

William last saw his brother in July, 1958, when, he said, his brother looked surprisingly well and seemed in high spirits. His chief complaint, William reported, was a lack of anything to do.